

REMARKS

Claims 1-11, 14, 15, and 17-24 were pending in the application. By this paper, claims 1, 7, 18, 19, 21, and 22 have been amended, claims 20, 23, and 24 have been canceled without prejudice, and claims 1-11, 14, 15, 17-19, 21, and 22 remain pending. Claims 19, 21, and 22 have only been amended herein to correspond with amendments made to the base claims, not to either narrow the claims or to respond to an art rejection. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the various objections and rejections are hereby respectfully solicited in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter

The applicants gratefully acknowledge that claims 10, 11, 14, 15, and 17 are allowed. These claims have not been amended herein and thus should remain allowed.

The applicants also gratefully acknowledge that claims 20-23 are considered allowable, but for being dependent upon rejected base claims. As set forth below, claims 21 and 22 should now be allowed in view of the amendments to the respective base claims. Claims 20 and 23 have been canceled without prejudice.

The action provides no disposition of previously added claim 24. Thus, the applicants rightfully assume that claim 24 is also considered allowable over the art of record. Further, the scope of claim canceled 24 was commensurate in scope with other allowable claims including, for example, claim 23. If claim 24 (its limitations added herein to claim 7) is to receive a different disposition, another action must be issued giving the applicants appropriate time and opportunity to respond.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-9 have again been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Tompkins, U.S. Patent No. 2,425,655 (Tompkins) in view of Taylor, U.S. Patent No. 5,611,771 (Taylor). The rejection should be withdrawn in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Independent claim 1 has been amended herein to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 23. Thus, claim 1 and its corresponding dependent claims 2-6 are in condition for allowance. The combination of Tompkins and Taylor, even if proper, fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of claims 1-6.

Independent claim 7 has been amended herein to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 24. Thus, claim 7 and its corresponding dependent claims 8 and 9 are in condition for allowance. Again, the combination of Tompkins and Taylor, even if proper, fails to teach or suggest all of the claim limitations of claims 7-9.

Claims 1-9 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the obviousness rejection and allowance of these claims are respectfully solicited.

Claims 18 and 19 have been rejected as obvious over Jessup, U.S. Patent No. 2,852,021 (Jessup) in view of Taylor. This rejection should be withdrawn in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Independent claim 18 has been amended herein to incorporate the limitations of allowable claim 20. Thus, claim 18 and its corresponding dependent claims 19, 21, and 22 are in condition for allowance. The combination of Jessup and Taylor, even if proper, fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of claims 18, 19, 21, and 22.

Claims 18, 19, 21, and 22 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the obviousness rejection and allowance of these claims are also respectfully solicited.

CONCLUSION

Claims 1-11, 14, 15, 17-19, 21, and 22 are in condition for allowance in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the various objections and rejections are hereby respectfully solicited.

The examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below in order to discuss any remaining issues or matters of form that will place this case in condition for allowance.

No fee is believed due at this time. However, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fee deficiency, or to credit any overpayments, to Deposit Account No. 13-2855 of the undersigned's firm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bryan J. Lempia", is written over a horizontal line.

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